

Appl. No. 10/607,645
Atty. Docket No. 6269RDC
Amdt. dated March 27, 2007
Reply to Office Action mailed September 27, 2006
Customer No. 27752

MAR 27 2007

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 12-22 remain in the application. No amendments are made hereunder.

Interview

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the telephonic interview of March 26, 2007 with Examiner Markoff. This interview was extremely helpful in understanding the Examiner's position.

Rejections Over the Prior Art

Claims 1, 14 and 22 are rejected under 36 USC 102(b) over U.S. 5,090,832, (Rivera et al.). Claims 2 and 9 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Rivera in view of U.S. 3,629,047 (Davison). Rivera is said to teach all aspects of the invention, except the scrim.

Claim 1 recites a cleaning pad having an absorbent layer is positioned between a scrubbing layer and a fluid impermeable attachment layer. Claim 1 expressly recites slits in the scrubbing layer.

The instant specification notes "The scrubbing layer preferably contains openings (e.g., slits) that provide an easy avenue for larger particulate soil to move freely in and become entrapped within the absorbent layer of the pad." (Specification page 8, lines 1-18).

Rivera does not teach slits. Instead, Rivera teaches the use of a nonwoven. The Office Action correctly notes that the Rivera nonwoven permits passage of soiled liquid to the absorbent layer (see Office Action Page 3, lines 3 - 4). This is consistent with the Rivera teaching that (at best) the scrubber layer is "porous for the entrapment of soil" (see Rivera Col. 1, lines 55 - 56).

However, the Rivera uptake of soiled liquid and entrapment of soil do not provide the benefit of the claimed scrubbing layer having slits which allow soil to move through the claimed scrubbing layer. By moving through the scrubbing layer, the soil is isolated from the surface to be cleaned and cannot scratch or abrade that surface. If one were to utilize the Rivera nonwoven (not having the claimed slits) entrapped soil can simply be wiped across the surface to be cleaned, resulting in scratches, resoiling, etc.

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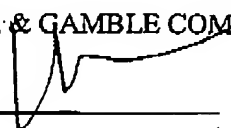
One of ordinary skill reading Rivera would not be lead to provide the claimed slits in the scrubbing layer. Rivera does not recognize the problem of entrapped soil, and cannot suggest the solution of allowing the soil to pass through the scrubbing layer to the absorbent layer. By providing the claimed slits, soil can be isolated from the surface to be cleaned.

There are no objections or rejections under 35 USC 112. In light of the foregoing distinctions, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw all rejections under 35 USC §§102-03 and allow all claims remaining in the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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